

COVID-19 Communications

Best Practices, Current and Emerging Trends and What to Expect Next





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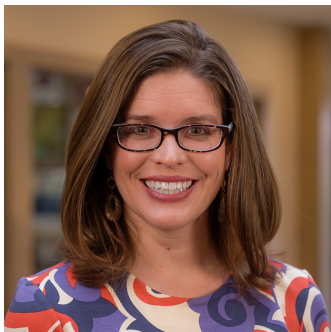
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Today's Discussion

- » **Best Practices:** *Ground rules and fundamentals of successful COVID-19 communications.*
- » **Current and Emerging Trends:** *How healthcare providers are pivoting to the latest trends in communications, employee engagement and media relations.*
- » **What to Expect Next:** *Thinking ahead about how to get prepared for the next round of COVID-19 communications needs.*
- » **Questions and Discussion**



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Best Practices

Ground rules and fundamentals of successful COVID-19 communications.



Best Practices



Coordinate Communications

- » Messages
- » Approvals
- » Timing aligned across enterprise
- » Shared tone and philosophy
- » Leadership support



Identify the right messengers

- » CEO – aspirational, mission-centered messages
- » Clinical leaders – patient care messages
- » HR leaders – employee engagement



Showcase Clinician Spokespeople to Separate Facts from Fear

- » Clinicians have credibility, understand the facts
- » Use existing internal channels to reach employees
- » Use traditional media, social media and online presence

Best Practices



Start Internally: Employees are most important audience

- » Employees are feeling, and will continue to feel, stress
- » Provide timely, transparent updates
- » Personally engage employees
- » Take quick action to address concerns



Remember: Responsible Transparency Builds Trust

- » Share information at appropriate time to bring a sense of purpose and confidence
- » Responsibly share information to limit panic and confusion
- » Match the messenger with the message

Best Practices



Have a plan to communicate most likely COVID-19 scenarios

- 1 Patient/Employee Infection**
- 2 Patient/Employee Death**
- 3 Capacity Issues**

Your plan should include:

- » Strategy for communication timing
- » Core messages: How you have prepared for COVID-19, who you are as an organization, the role you are playing in the COVID-19 pandemic
- » Audiences to reach
- » Tools to reach audiences

Best Practices



Coordinate Communications



Identify the right messengers



Showcase Clinician Spokespeople to Separate Facts from Fear



Start Internally: Employees are most important audience



Remember: Responsible Transparency Builds Trust



Have a plan to communicate most likely COVID-19 scenarios

Current and Emerging Trends

How healthcare providers are pivoting to the latest trends in communications, employee engagement and media relations.





Trends: Employee Engagement

Employees are Stressed and Scared

- » COVID-19 adds pressure to an already stressful profession
- » Trying to stay informed on new processes, perform new tasks
- » Worried about their health, health of their families

Many Healthcare Providers are Working to Ease Stress

- » Clear and timely updates
- » Providing childcare resources
- » Offering meals and places to stay overnight



Trends: Communications

Rapid Operational Changes Create Communications Challenges

- » Limiting visitors and guests
- » New screening policies
- » Elective procedures rescheduled
- » Telehealth and virtual health technologies leveraged
- » Employees redeployed to different functions
- » Raises questions of financial challenges



Trends: Media Relations

Media focused on hospitals being unprepared

- » Limits in beds, equipment and caregivers could force hospitals to turn away patients
- » Essential to be cautiously confident

COVID-19 is here to stay, so are opportunities to showcase innovation

- » Will be addressing the issue for months, not weeks
- » Intense media attention will continue
- » Opportunity to spotlight extraordinary effort and people, innovation such as telehealth, non-traditional models

Next media cycle

- » Caregiver/patient stories
- » Financial and operational stories

Trends



- » **Employees are Stressed and Scared**
- » **Many Healthcare Providers are Working to Ease Stress**
- » **Rapid Operational Changes Create Communications Challenges**
- » **Media focused on hospitals being unprepared**
- » **COVID-19 is here to stay, so are opportunities to showcase innovation**
- » **Next media cycle: Caregiver/patient stories; financial and operational stories**

What to Expect Next

Thinking ahead about how to get prepared for the next round of COVID-19 communications needs.



What to Expect Next

- » Radical operational changes and 'change fatigue' among employees
- » Capacity issues due to space, equipment or employee limitations
- » Shortages of supplies
- » Employee burnout/stress
- » Conflicting information from healthcare authorities
- » Need for coordination with other providers, health authorities
- » Employee error
- » Patient billing issues – how COVID-19 care will be paid for
- » Labor unions looking to capitalize on fear
- » Rumors among employees, community

What to Do Today

- » **Take care of yourself**
- » **Ask for help when you need it**
 - » This is a marathon, not a sprint. We will all need help.
- » **Have three goals to accomplish each day**
 - » Without goals, you risk only reacting

Questions and Discussion

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